Pest Update (August 5, 2009)

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John Ball, Forest Health Specialist, Extension Forester

Email: john_ball@sdstate.edu
Phone: 605-688-4737
Samples sent to: John Ball
Horticulture, Forestry, Landscape and Parks
Rm 201, Northern Plains Biostress Lab
North Campus Lane
South Dakota State University
Brookings, SD 57007-0996

Available on the net at:
http://www.state.sd.us/doa/Forestry/educational-information/Pest-Alert-Archives.htm.

Any treatment recommendations, including those identifying specific pesticides, are for the convenience of the reader. Pesticides mentioned in this publication are generally those that are most commonly available to the public in South Dakota and the inclusion of a product shall not be taken as an endorsement or the exclusion a criticism regarding effectiveness. Please read and follow all label instructions and the label is the final authority for a product's use on a particular pest or plant. Products requiring a commercial pesticide license are occasionally mentioned if there are limited options available. These products will be identified as such but it is the reader's responsibility to determine if they can legally apply any product identified in this publication.

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Plant development (Phenology) for the growing season

The Amur maackias have finished blooming in Brookings; we are still at normal development for the year (but wetter than normal at least in Brookings).

E-samples

Aphids are out in force at this time of year. Many people are calling concerned about their "weeping" tree. The weeping is not from the tree but the aphids that are feeding on the leaves and excreting a sticky substance known as honeydew. Usually the aphids are not a serious threat to the health of the tree though heavy infestations can result in some premature yellowing of the leaves as well as leaf drop. At this time of year you'll often find the aphids or their debris on the underside of the leaves as seen in this picture sent by Craig, one of our foresters over in Watertown. Aphids can be controlled easiest by a soil drench of any insecticide containing imidacloprid such as Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub Insect Control and applied early in the spring just after the leaves open.

The mystery tree this week is common chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*). Last week I received numerous samples of Tatarian honeysuckle, this week it is common chokecherry. The questions are the same as last week; what is it and is the fruit edible? The fruit is edible, in fact in 2007 it was voted as the state fruit of North Dakota (note: South Dakota does not have a state fruit). While North Dakota recognizes the value to the fruit, it was also highly valued, and still is, by the native nations. *Capa sapa wi*, "black cherry moon" is the name the Lakota gave to the month of August, the time when the fruit ripens. The Lakota grind the fruit, pit and flesh together, into cakes and dry them in the sun. This can be mixed with dried meat to form pemmican. The fruit can also be made into jams and jellies.

Common chokecherry trees can sometimes be confused with common buckthorn and this is a serious mistake if you are planning on picking the fruit. While common chokecherry fruit is edible, common buckthorn is not and works as a very, very powerful laxative. The way to separate the two is chokecherry leaves are arranged alternately on the twig while common buckthorn (as seen in the picture to the right) are subopposite, where a leaf is almost opposite another leaf on the twig. The margin or edge to buckthorn leaves are smooth, the chokecherry has teeth on the margin of the leaves. Common

buckthorn also has a single thorn at the tip of each branch. The fruit differs in that chokecherry dark purple to black fruit is about 1/3 inch in diameter and contains a single large seed while buckthorn glossy black fruit is about 1/4 inch in diameter and contains two to four small seeds.

Verticillium wilt is a common problem on catalpas this year. The classic leaf symptoms of this wilt disease are yellowing, marginal scorching – almost a black margin, curling and premature leaf fall though not all these symptoms will always appear on the same leaves or tree. In addition to these symptoms there will often be some branch dieback, either one or two branches in the same portion of the canopy or sometimes the entire tree. Dying branches often have green streaking on the sapwood. The disease is caused by a soil-borne fungus that can live in the soil for many years feeding off dead material. It can move into the root through wounds or natural opening and then spread through the tree. The disease has two forms; chronic and acute. Trees with the acute form of the disease often die within a season or two. Trees with the chronic form may suffer only a branch or two dying then recover only to have another branch die in a few years. The disease cannot be controlled with a fungicide treatment, instead it is managed by maintaining tree health by ensuring the tree is receiving adequate water during drought and fertilizing. The disease is often worse in years with cooler, wet conditions; conditions that fit this year across much of the state.

Samples received

Brown County (extension) **Is this a cherry or ash seedling?**

This is an ash seedling. The seedlings often have simple leaves but they are still arranged opposite on the twig.

Campbell County (extension) **Here is a sample of a dying cotoneaster. Do you think this is fireblight?**

Yes, unfortunately hedge cotoneaster is a common host of this bacterial disease. The best means of managing fireblight in this shrub is to cut the plant back to within 3 inches of the ground this winter. Oftentimes this eliminates the disease from the plant or plants.

Campbell County (extension) **Here is a decline cottonwood from Mound City. The owner said this is the only tree to have this problem.**

This is the venturia shoot and leaf blight discussed in the last issue of the *Pest Update*. The disease is usually twig and branch killers as it stops as the junction between branches. The only control is to prune out affected shoots and branches and rake up and dispose of any fallen leaves.

Codington County (extension) **What is this gall on the oak leaves?**

This is the hedgehog gall. They are a fuzzy round to oblong gall that forms on the midrib of the leaf.

Minnehaha County (division) **Is this pod gall on Donovan's tree?**

Yes, the small pods or curls on the leaflets at the tips of the branches are caused by a small gall midge. There are several generations per year so the tree can become infested several times during the season but only the new growth is affected. The best treatment is carbaryl applied just as the new leaves have expanded in the spring. This treatment will only control the first generation but this is usually all that needs to be done.

Tripp County (extension) **We have several plants in this sample. There is an apple that we believe is infected with cedar-apple rust and a cherry and a walnut with discolored leaves.**

You are correct about the apple; the leaves are infected with cedar-apple rust. The note mentioned that the tree had been sprayed prior to the blossoms opening and again two weeks later but this is not enough applications to control the disease, particularly during this wet year. Remember the first spray is put on just as the leaves are opening and continues every 7 to 10 days till three weeks after petal fall. The walnut is showing symptoms of walnut anthracnose, a common disease of this tree that often results in discolored leaves by mid-August along with leaf drop. It does little harm to the tree; though raking up the fallen leaves in August is never a fun task. The cherry is showing symptoms of a leaf spot disease. Again, this is a common problem by this time of year but not harmful to the tree. The note mentions a peach tree in the sample but none was included.

Yankton County (extension) **This is a bare Japanese barberry. What might have caused this problem?**

Since there were no leaves in the sample and the twigs sent in were alive and had no signs of any disease I can only guess. If these are only four plants out of 15, and they are scattered among the planting, the problem may be related to a transplanting problem. I would remove the plants and place in new ones in the spring.